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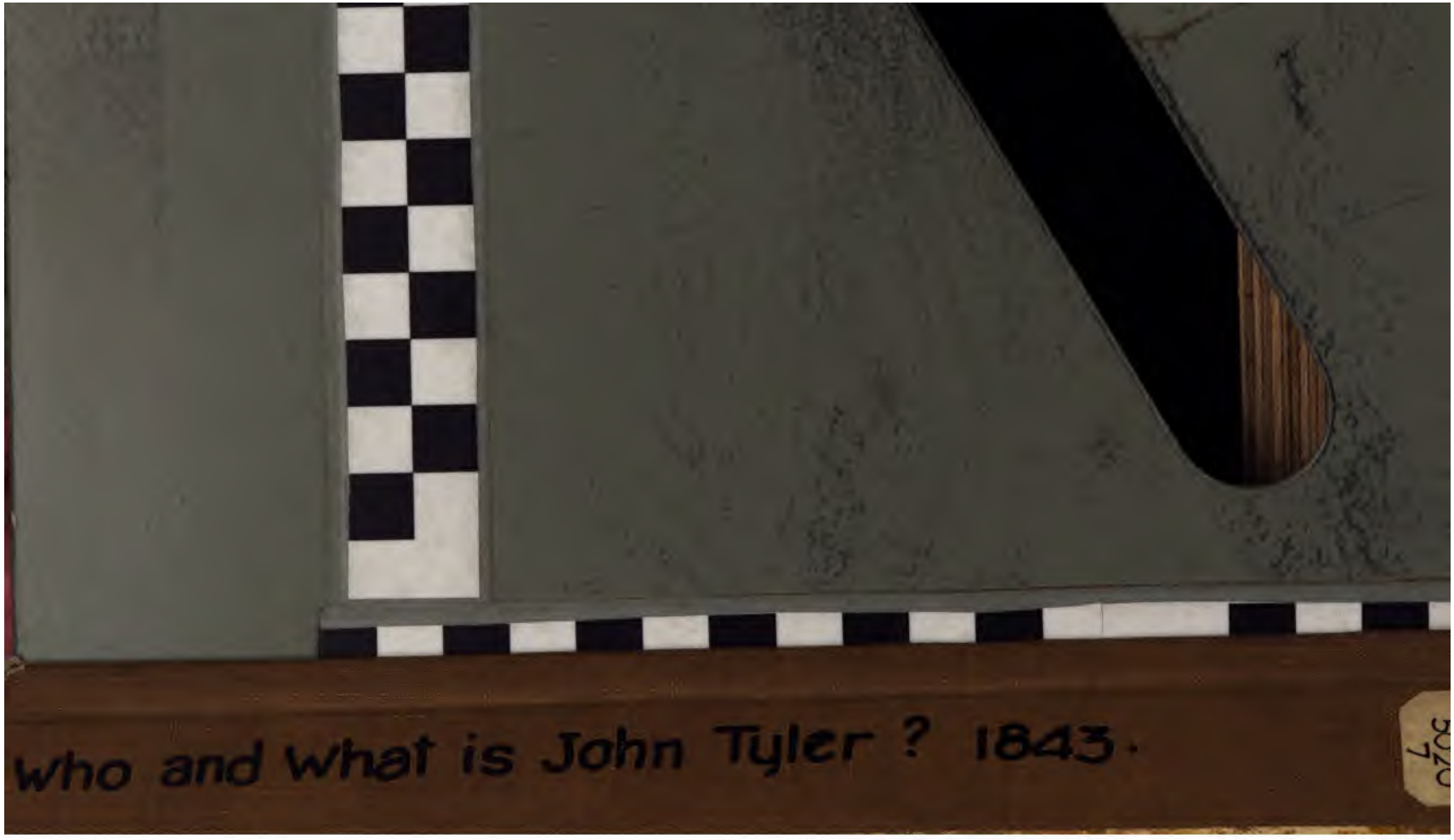
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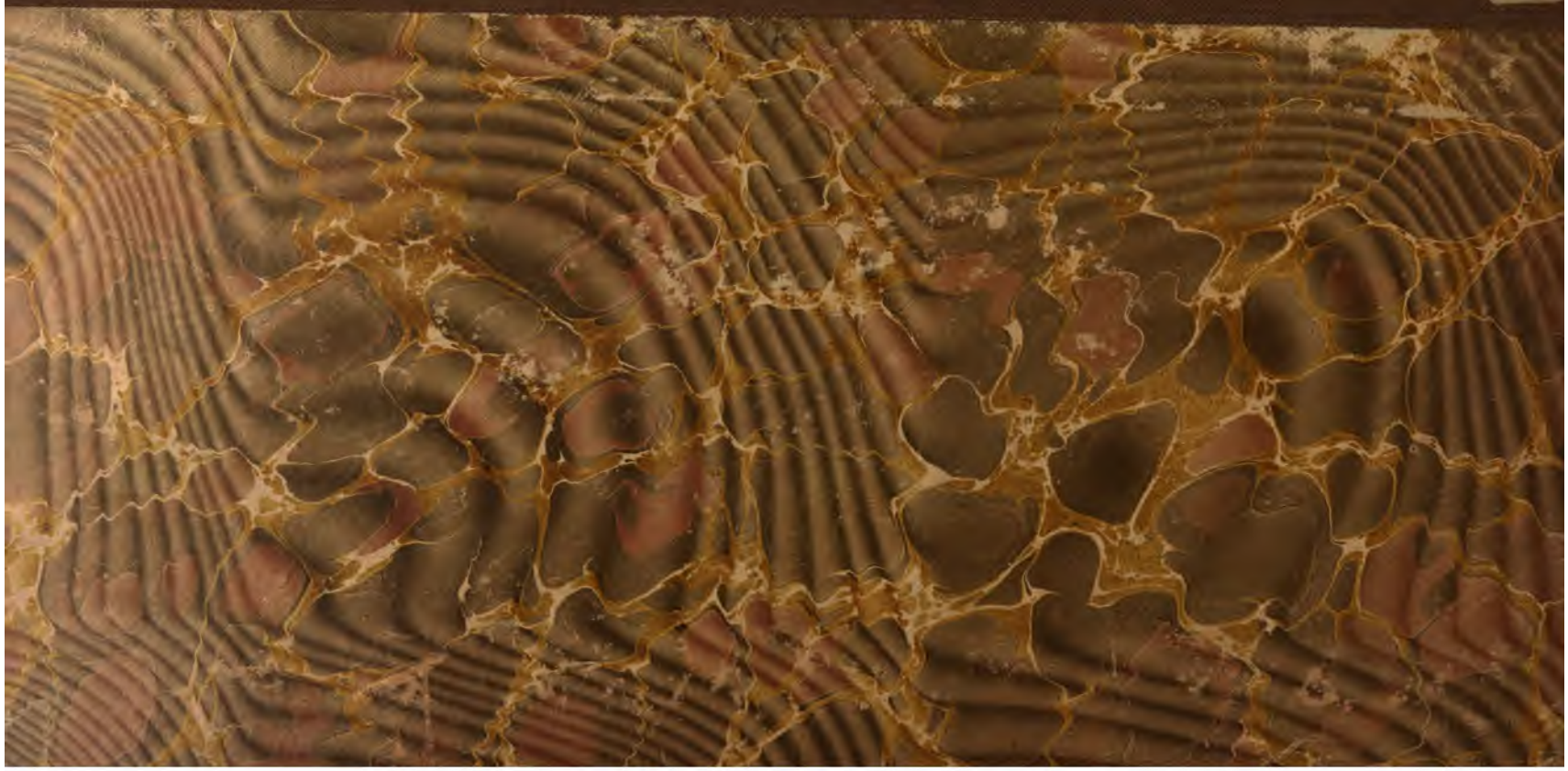

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Political Tracts for the Times.

No. II.

WHO AND WHAT IS JOHN TYLER?

By ANTI-JUNIUS.

"Free minds, free hearts, free souls, are the materials, and the only materials, out of which free governments are constructed."—Democratic Review.

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WHO AND WHAT IS JOHN TYLER?

PREFACE.

The extraordinary political fortunes of President Tyler are, of themselves, a matter of interest, approaching, indeed, to romance.

It will be seen in the following pages that he has been honored with public confidence since he was twenty years of age; that he has passed, without undue effort on his part, through all the gradations of political life up to the Presidency. It will also be seen, that in all these he has acquitted himself like an honest man and a statesman.

The violent abuse which Mr. Tyler has had to encounter of late, is sufficient to alarm every true Democrat. Though this opposition has immeasurably enhanced the moral beauty of his conduct; it proves, beyond a peradventure, that Democracy is soon to be but a *name*, if the impudent spirit of dictation, exercised by certain presses and politicians, professedly Democratic, be not rebuked.

There are other elections than that of 1844 *in the future;* and we greatly mistake, if the Democracy do not learn the truth in the premises; and not rest content till the majesty of principle, as seen in the course of President Tyler, be triumphantly vindicated.

We therefore send abroad this little tract with no misgivings, but with hope and confidence. We have yet to learn that the true-hearted Democracy will not listen to words of sincerity; that they will not defend one who has stood by their principles in time of desertion and peril.

President Tyler expects no quarters, asks no quarters, from the party-dictators to whom allusion has been made: but he *does* ask a hearing of the candid, the upright, the just. At their hands, and theirs only, does he seek a verdict; a verdict which will be worth more, a thousand-fold more, than the plaudits of the festering partisans whose only principles are the "five loaves and two fishes."

The friends of President Tyler will not forsake him till this verdict be fairly given.

The writer has been exceedingly embarrassed in preparing the following pages, by the necessity of confining himself within his limits. It is a toil to *condense*, a pleasure to *amplify*, in the defence of a man who, like Schiller's artist, "looks upward to his dignity and his calling, and not downward to his happiness and his wants."

December, 1843.

PART I.

THERE is no infirmity of the human mind so common as that of *Prejudice.* This leads us to form opinions of persons and things, without a due examination of the facts or arguments which are necessary to a just and impartial decision.

Every one can call to mind instances in which he has been prejudiced against others, and in which, on a more intimate acquaintance with them, these prejudices have passed away.

It is especially so in religion and politics. The Protestant cherishes ungenerous prepossessions against his Catholic neighbor and the Catholic faith. Circumstances bring him in contact with a faithful, eloquent Cheverus, or with a meek, toil-worn Sister of Charity, and he finds that in the bosom of these devoted disciples the true spirit of Christianity dwells. He unlearns his prejudice, and is himself a better man. So with the Catholic toward the Protestant. At a distance from each other, he misunderstands the principles and practice of the Protestant. Circumstances bring them together; their different creeds are forgotten in acts of mutual good-will; his prejudices pass away like the thin vapor which for a moment shrouds the brightness of the sun. He, too, is a better man; and he wonders that he had not earlier gone to school of candor.

In Politics it is the same. We imbibe our ideas of men and measures, we scarce know how. Insensibly we become possessed of almost invincible predilections. They come to us, it may be, with other unexamined notions of our childhood, and become a part of ourselves. We grow older, and we find that all is not patriotism which wears that sacred name; that there be some good men and true, whom we have misunderstood and undervalued, and whom the tongue of envy has maligned. We unlearn our prejudices in these matters, and are better men, nobler men, *manlier* men, than when we cherished unjust opinions.

So it is in the social relations of life. We dislike a person, we know not why. We are averse to his companionship. We would have nothing to do with him. Something, however, occurs, which brings us into his society. We marvel that we find him even *endurable.* Our dislike is lessened, our preju-

dice gradually gives way, and he whom we disliked to excess is now our honored friend. Prejudice has done it all; and he only is FREE who judges not unless he have evidence on which he can rely.

Unprincipled politicians are prompt to take advantage of this tendency of the mind. If a man superior to them in the elements that form a noble character appear as a competitor for public regard, they instinctively go to the foul work of calumny and misrepresentation. In proportion as he rises above them in character and abilities does their violence rise. They cannot endure the thought of his success, and what the truth could not accomplish they seek to compass by falsehood.

Thus situated is the noble-hearted Democrat who stands at the head of the Government.

Let us dwell for a moment on his introduction to the Presidency.

The election of 1840 had passed by. He had been triumphantly elevated to the Vice-Presidency. His services not being required at Washington, he remained in the quiet of his much-loved home, little dreaming that such stern responsibilities were soon to pass into his hands. The post which brought him tidings of the President's illness had scarce laid its budget at his door, when a messenger from Washington apprized him that death had taken away the CHIEF; and that, unprepared as he was, he must enter upon the highest duties that can devolve upon an American citizen. Trusting in that Power whose aid is never sought in vain, he was obedient to the summons. *To do his duty to the People*, was the measure of his ambition and the rule of his conduct. For this, his eye was single; for this, he was ready to give himself, and all he had, or should have, a willing sacrifice.

Arriving at Washington, he immediately took the oath of office as President of the United States. Let us ponder well the solemn covenant between himself and his God, between himself and the country, which this oath implies.

"*I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.*"

Three days afterwards he presented his first address to the people, as Chief Magistrate; a paper replete with simplicity, beauty, and sound Democratic principle. Everywhere was it hailed by the Democracy as a pledge of better things than they had expected at the hands of the Whigs. It was the olive leaf that told that the angry waters they had feared were to subside. It was this simple-hearted, straight-forward document that reached the writer of these pages in his sequestered frontier-home, and convinced him that a Democrat in whom was no guile, had been raised up in an hour of extremity.

For a brief, very brief period, there was silence in the Whig camp. A new order of things had come to pass, to which it did not immediately appear how the interests of a certain ambitious partisan could be adapted. It was finally determined, that he whom they could not seduce from his integrity as a man and a Democrat, should be destroyed by calumny and malignant opposition. Now the floodgates of falsehood and abuse are opened upon him. He was "ruthlessly charged with hypocrisy, treachery, feebleness, imbecility; with abandoning his party and betraying his friends." In every possible way his administration was embarrassed. The sagacity of his more able enemies was tasked to the utmost to frame bills in Congress in direct hostility to his well-known views, for no object but to embarrass him; and the low cunning of the miserable *Botts* (an appropriate name) went about the filthy work of, in his own *elegant* language, "heading off the Captain!"

Let the candid reader call to memory the abuse heaped upon President Tyler, and he will not hesitate to say it has no parallel in the political annals of the country.

☞ *We now come to a most important inquiry*, to wit: WHAT WAS THE SECRET OF THIS FOUL ABUSE; *whence the origin of these clamors?*

On this point the whole matter hinges, so far as the Whigs are concerned. Let the *truth* in the premises be pondered well by the candid reader. This is the truth:—General Harrison was pledged to but one term of service. Mr. Clay was to be his successor. The whole patronage of the Government

was to be devoted to the cause of Mr. Clay. This, it was supposed, would insure his election against any Democratic candidate that could be brought into the field. Mr. Tyler came into the Presidency. He had no confidence in Mr. Clay's political principles, and he did not wish to aid him in his ambitious views, in ever so small a degree. This state of things Mr. Clay at once saw; and he resolved to bring the entire force of the Whig press and party to destroy the noble President, whose ear was deaf to seduction, to entreaty, and to threatening.

This is the secret of the whole matter. This will account for the change which so soon came over the spirit of the Whig party. But a few days before the air was laden with his praise. In numberless hard-cider revelries the Whigs almost split their throats in the chorus,

"Tippecanoe, and *Tyler too.*"

His name was used by them as the synonyme of all that was of good report in public and private life.

The change can be accounted for on no other principle than that we have named; and, had we room, we could present facts which would demonstrate the position assumed. It will form a part of our labor on another occasion; when a tale will be told which will put the blush on cheeks unused to such a sign of modesty.

PART II.

Having glanced at the false position in which the honest President has been placed by the action of prejudice, and the machinations of his former *Whig* friends, we come to notice the still more unjustifiable and impolitic course which certain DEMOCRATS (?) have taken towards him.

On this point we have much, *very much*, to say; for it involves considerations which are vital to the perpetuity of Democratic principles in our land. We earnestly beg the reader to follow us carefully through this part of our work, and ponder well the thoughts we may offer. We desire this the more earnestly for we believe that, *of a truth, President Tyler has been raised up to meet a crisis in the struggles of Democracy against Federalism, of more importance to Democracy than any struggle she has had since our nation had its birth.*

We admit that this is taking high ground; but it is that to which facts drive us. *History* will not fail to utter its testimony to this, as it shall record the doings of the perilous times in which we live. But to our work.*

Our country seems destined to become the greatest on the earth. Its rivers stretch from the frozen to the burning zone. Uncounted millions of acres of the richest land, which the eye of the wandering bird only hath seen, lie waiting for man. These all are the patrimony of the poor and the oppressed of the Old World, and of our children and children's children in ages to come. Thither the former will be driven by the iron rule of despotism; thither the latter will go to earn and enjoy the blessings of life. In one hundred years three hundred millions of people will find a home within our borders; their physical and political condition materially affected by the form and pressure of *our* times!

Now let us cast the eye across the ocean, and see in what condition, whether physical or political, the crowded nations there are placed. In England, professedly the best governed of them all, there are degradation and distress which the masses seem unable longer to endure or to smother.* Their forbearance is almost miraculous, their patience superhuman. On the continent, though there is less of bodily suffering, there is as much of social degradation. Men are not allowed to change their place of residence or their occupation, nor pass from town to town, without *written* permission of the authorities! To be without a passport is evidence of one's being a fugitive or a vagabond. In Hungary, a toll is wrung from the hands of the hard-working laborers, in passing

* In the city of London, (not including its suburbs,) there were, in 1842, 29,932 paupers! In Great Britain and Ireland there are ten millions of people who "*never* use wheat."

over a bridge, which is not demanded from a well-dressed person. In some countries men are sold like cattle with the estate.* Poverty, abject as that of the wild beast of the forest, is the portion of the *people*, while the rulers can scarce compute their own wealth, and their bodies, like that of Prince Esterhazy, blaze with diamonds.

Now, what hath caused all this? Obviously, the political system of those countries; for a brighter sun, a richer soil, a more benignant sky, blesses no country more than it blesses them. With his own eyes the writer of these pages has seen these things.

Here let us lay it to heart, *that the tendencies of our common nature are the same in every age, in every land.*

In all ages of the world, a monopoly of privileges and of power has been the stake for which politicians have played. Selfish and ambitious spirits have sought to occupy the seats of influence; to make the laws; to make others hew wood and draw water for them; and so to frame a Constitution that these privileges should be hereditary. This is Monarchy, Feudalism, Aristocracy, *Federalism*, or what other name we may please to give it. Its essence is the same in either form; the difference is only in degree.

Opposed to this is—what?—DEMOCRACY. Democracy demands equality of rights and privileges; demands the right to speak and think as best may suit itself. If unjust claims or pretensions are urged, it is prompt to deny them. It is vigilant, and jealous of the least inroad upon equal justice, and needs but to see where danger lies to arrest its progress.

There is no fear that the principle opposed to Democracy will ever assume in this country the dreadful forms it has put on in older ones. We cannot become serfs, nor our rulers lords.

☞ *But will not unhallowed ambition seek to control, in some form or other, the popular mind, and to accumulate power in its own hands?*

To this—

THE PRESENT DANGER OF DEMOCRACY—

let us attend for a few moments.

The careful observer has not failed to notice, that, within the last twenty years, political freedom has been sadly trenched upon by certain leading Democrats (!) under the guise of a necessary party discipline. Here and there certain cliques of leaders have impudently assumed to direct party opinion, party tactics, party conscience. It would insult the reader's common sense and intelligence to cite the proof of this. The *fact* stands out, naked and undeniable, until the significant title of "*Collar-men*" has passed into common use, as plainly applicable to the Democracy. No Democrat has been allowed to dissent from the self-appointed rules of the party, in howsoever small a degree, without losing political caste. *We know whereof we affirm.* It is as undeniable as it is that there is a sun to give light by day, and a moon by night. No disavowal of it on the part of the leaders or of their press, no ridicule, no abuse, can alter the fact. *They* know it, the party knows it, and the world knows it.

It should ever be borne in mind, that *it is inseparable from the true idea of freedom, that a man shall think, and act, and vote on all political matters, as best may suit him.* If this is in any way or in any degree abridged or trenched upon, no matter under what pretence, it is a positive trenching upon one's rights as a Democrat and a Man. It is impudence and tyranny to do it; and he who does it, is *not* a Democrat, though he scream Democracy till he crack his cheeks.

In Russia, the *knout* makes men square their ideas by the ruler's wish. In Turkey, a man must echo the Sultan's or the Pasha's will, or go to bed without ears. In England, he must vote as the lord of the manor shall direct, or bid farewell to the home of his childhood, and give place to another tenant more supple in conscience and less of a Man. In our own beloved country,

* "Without an exception," said Mr. Ward, in the House of Commons, "the tenants of the Duke of Leeds are regarded as a portion of the chattels of the estate."
A late report in the British Parliament classified the tenantry into those who were "packed up into manors and bought in the gross, and those who were let loose and bought individually."

politicians have risen up, with large influence, and able, through prostituted presses, to control the Democratic mind. If any one dissent from them, he has no more a standing in the party! Would not these men be autocrats in Russia, pashas in Turkey, aristocrats in England? Is not *their* dictation the result of the same spirit as is the iron rule of their exemplars in the Old World? Yes. And the obedience they demand at our hands is the very essence and relic of despotism. It would deserve our *contempt* if the dangers which it threatens did not give rise to more serious feelings.

Let these impudent lordlings learn a lesson of the poor imbecile Charles the tenth, who lost even the semblance of power by drawing its reins too closely. The motto of the true democrat is—Loyalty to Principle, not to leaders.

The summing up of our argument on this part of our subject is this, namely;—*That the violent and unappeasable abuse of President Tyler by the Washington Globe, the Albany Regency, and their affiliated presses and politicians, is subversive of the very first principles of Democracy:* and that, as a correlative, *it is the privilege and the duty of the true Democrat to sustain him, through evil and through good report.*

Twice in one year President Tyler vetoed the United States Bank. Is not this democratic? He has called to his Cabinet men known and read of all to be democrats. Is not this democratic? No one, friend nor foe, can put his finger on a line written, or a word uttered by him, that is not democratic. And when the whole camp of the Whigs was let loose upon him, *because of his democracy,* he stood firm, the Leonidas of the democratic faith.

We shall now pass to a brief sketch of his life.

PART III.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF JOHN TYLER.

His Birth.

JOHN TYLER was born in Charles City County, Virginia, the 29th of March, 1790. His father was one of the leading Revolutionary characters of Virginia; was for many years a judge of the District Court of the United States; and, as a distinguished author says, "he was simple in his manners, distinguished for the uprightness and fidelity with which he discharged his official duties, and enjoyed in an uncommon degree the esteem and confidence of his fellow citizens." He was several times elected speaker of the House of Burgesses, as it was then styled, and was also honored with the Gubernatorial chair of the State. As Judge of the Court of Admiralty, *the first prize ever taken by the United States upon the ocean was brought before him for adjudication.*

His Youth.

The boyhood of John Tyler was one of close study, as will be seen in the fact that at the age of *twelve* he entered college. Here he was beloved by the venerable President of the College and his fellow-students to an unusual degree. The frank, confiding spirit, which so eminently characterizes his manhood, appeared beautifully in the boy. None knew him but to love him. When his collegiate course was finished, he delivered an address, which was pronounced by the Faculty as the best ever delivered on a similar occasion in that college. Thus passed his early boyhood, untainted by vice; laying the foundation of future greatness; a friend to all around, and all around a friend to him.

His Early Manhood.

On leaving college he selected the profession of law for a pursuit; and studied partly with his father, and partly with Edmund Randolph, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. *No marvel that the indomitable spirit with which President Tyler defends what he believes to be principle,* should possess his

bosom, when in youth he sat at the feet of one of the band who signed that great document of civil liberty.

His progress in the law was brilliant and rapid. At the age of nineteen he applied for a license to practise in the courts of his native State. This was granted without even an inquiry as to his age. He passed at once into a large practice, and had money been the object of his ambition, he could have acquired a princely fortune by his profession. Not a word has ever been said against his integrity as a lawyer, even by his bitterest opponent. He was an *honest lawyer;* ever ready to defend the weak against the strong, the poor against the rich, the oppressed against the oppressor.

His Entrance upon Public Life.

The virtues and talents of the boy were appreciated by his fellow-citizens; and at the age of twenty he was offered a nomination to the Legislature of Virginia. This he declined, but at the age of twenty-one he was chosen to that body by a nearly unanimous vote. This triumphant testimonial of the purity of his youthful character must be one of the proudest recollections of his life. He entered upon public service a DEMOCRAT. Mr. Madison was then President, and a more zealous supporter that distinguished man did not have. Mr. Tyler took a decided stand against Great Britain at that day, on the question of war. He had no spice of Toryism in his composition. He knew his infant country had *right* on her side, and this was enough. He also knew that she had energies adequate to her defence and triumph. His eloquence and influence were not all the offering he laid upon his country's altar at that trying period, when domestic Toryism was not less to be feared than British cannon. He raised a volunteer company by his own resources, devised its simple tactics, and stood ready, stripling as he was, to lay down his life for his country. The spirit of '76 is seen in this simple fact. It has never been blazoned forth for public admiration, nor have other rare and beautiful facts which are scattered up and down throughout his entire history.

Mr. Tyler was elected to the Legislature for five successive years. At one of these elections seven other candidates were in the field against him, but he received all but five votes! Thus did those who best knew him testify to his worth and abilities. Many years later, when a candidate for Congress, he received all but one vote, and this too when opposed by a distinguished competitor. To what does this popularity testify? Let any of his enemies point to a popularity like it, in the annals of our entire country.

His Appearance in Congress.

When but twenty-five he became a member of Congress. At this early age his pure character and commanding talents were thus yielding their legitimate fruit.

His conduct in Congress was distinguished by a modest dignity and manly firmness. These characteristics are vividly remembered by his contemporaries of that period. Topics of surpassing interest were before the house during the first session of his term; in all of which he was found on the true Democratic ground, defending its principles with signal ability. Among these was the Navigation Act, which was designed to protect the commerce of our rising country, and to open a clear sea for the enterprise of our gallant sailors and our princely merchants. "*Free Trade and Sailors' Rights*" has been his motto from the earliest moment of his political career.

We find him at this session advocating the reduction of the pay of the members of Congress. He, with others, deemed the pay too high; others were for an increase of pay. The strife grew hot, when the youthful Tyler rose, and said:—"I did not float into this house on the tide of popular declamation; I was elected to supply the vacancy occasioned by the lamented death of my honored predecessor. Popularity is to be desired by all, and the good esteem of his fellow-men is the best reward the patriot can receive.

"You have no robes of office here to bestow, no stars or garters to confer, but the proudest title which we can boast, and the only one worthy of being

boasted of, is that which is to be read in the applause of our contemporaries and the gratitude of posterity. This is not to be obtained by a low and grovelling pursuit of popular favor; and the man who rests his hopes of popularity on such a course will, most assuredly, be disappointed in his object.

"I shall vote for a repeal of the compensation law, as I know it to be the wish of my constituents that it should be repealed. I have had a fair opportunity of knowing their wishes, for I am fresh from their hands. I am not disposed to hold up my constituents in the ridiculous light in which some gentlemen have represented theirs. I have too much respect for them to do so. They have looked to the large national debt, and think it requires reduction, they believe that economy is necessary. They see the tax-gatherers dispersed throughout the country, and they cannot be made to understand why, at a time when retrenchment was so necessary, Congress should have increased their wages. It is vain to tell them, as some gentlemen, very nice at calculation, have made it appear, that each of them have only to bear an additional burden of one and a quarter cents. Their answer is at hand: they say, and have a right to say to you, take the pressure from off our shoulders—we feel the weight of it; take the burden from *our* backs—then take it from your own. They go farther. Although they do not believe that this Congress is corrupt, they regard you as setting a bad example. They look forward to distant, and, perhaps, less honest times, when wicked men, profiting by your example, may vote themselves ample fortunes, and laugh at the people whose trust they have thus abused. I repeat, that my constituents do not think this Congress corrupt for having passed this law. They look here, and see men who have devoted their youth and manhood to the service of their country, who have grown old at the helm of the vessel. They see among you many who have rode out, in security, the boisterous storm of faction and of party, and have avoided the whirlpools which threatened to swallow up both you and them. They look to this field, and see many of you who are willing to expose your own breasts to receive the lightning ere it should fall upon the bosom of your country; and, I repeat it, they do not distrust your patriotism, but they strongly disapprove your course. It is not for me to inquire into the correctness of their opinions. It is enough that I know their will, to cause me to obey it."

Mr. Tyler concluded by declaring that he should vote for a repeal of the law, to take effect from the first of the session, and expressing an earnest hope that the bill might pass in that form.

But we cannot enlarge. We have, with a brevity painful to ourselves, when such rich materials were presented, followed President Tyler through the trying scenes of boyhood, youth, and early manhood. We have seen his fellow-citizens sending him, while almost a boy, to be their representative in their own Legislature and in the Congress of the United States:—a fitting commencement, indeed, of his beautiful life; a pledge that in the maturity of his powers, he would be a man on whom reliance could be placed.

It is not within our limits to follow Mr. Tyler as he passed, without noise or effort, through the various stations to which his fellow-citizens called him. Suffice it to say, that he was successively elected, with equal unanimity, to the Legislature until the winter of 1815–16, when, by joint-ballot of the Legislature, and with the loss of only fifteen votes in the two houses, consisting of two hundred and forty-two members, he was chosen a member of the Privy Council of State. In the fall of 1816 he was elected a member of the House of Representatives of the United States, from the Richmond district, and continued to serve in that house until the year 1821, when, by reason of ill health, he declined a re-election. In 1823 he was again elected to the Legislature of Virginia by the citizens of his native county, and served till the winter of 1825, when he was chosen Governor of Virginia for one year, and in 1826 he was re-elected to the same office by a unanimous vote. Early in the year 1827 he was chosen a senator in Congress, and was re-elected to that elevated station in 1833, and continued to serve until 1836; during which time he was elected President pro. tem. of the Senate, when, in consequence of his being unable to

reconcile certain instructions of the Legislature then given to his sense of constitutional obligation, he resigned three unexpired years of his term, and went into retirement, in which he remained until elected Vice-president of the United States in 1840, with the exception of one session's service in the Legislature in 1838, from the county of James City.

Who is John Tyler? has thus been briefly answered. *What he is*, as a politician, may be gathered from his sentiments as they are collected from public records. To these we shall now address ourselves; greatly mistaking the premises, if we cannot prove, that on all the leading topics of the day, he is as thoroughly Democratic as was Jefferson, Jackson, or Van Buren.

His Opposition to a Bank of the United States.

"I am bound to furnish you with arguments, but not with *brains*," said a distinguished man to one of those stupid talkers who infest community. With equal pertinency might the remark be made to those who charge inconsistency upon President Tyler in relation to a United States Bank. Almost the maiden act of his political life was to oppose the Bank. And this he has continued to do, under every administration, under every condition of things. In one of his earliest speeches he likened the Bank to a sturdy BEGGAR. These are his words, uttered, be it remembered, in 1819.

"The first reflection which occurs is, that the Bank does not loan money. It merely exchanges credit. It gives its notes-of-hand for the notes-of-hand of individuals; and, paying no premium in the form of interest itself, requires a premium of those with whom it deals. Its credit is founded on the confidence of the public in its capacity, which confidence is the result of the governmental action in its creation. This remark applies to all incorporated banks; but another circumstance exists in regard to this bank, which extends its control throughout the mercantile world—the fact of its notes being made receivable everywhere in payment of the government dues. However solvent an individual may be, his notes will not pass currently beyond a small neighborhood circle. He is, therefore, under the frequent necessity of adopting the bank credit or notes for his own credit or notes, and of giving a premium in the form of interest, when, in fact, his solvency is as perfect, his responsibility as entire, to the extent of his undertaking, as that of the Bank. True, the Bank is liable to be called on to redeem its notes daily; but the fact that its issues exceed its capital twice or thrice, shows that that responsibility is remote and inconsiderable. Is, then, five per cent. enough to compensate the Bank for this exchange of its credit for the credit of individuals? Can any one doubt it? Take *a beggar* in the streets, and let the government announce its determination to receive his notes in the payment of its dues, amounting, as they do, to twenty-five or thirty millions annually, and who doubts but that the credit of the *beggar** would be sought after with avidity, and that he would speedily be enriched if he was permitted to receive a premium much below five per cent.?"

On another occasion in Congress he said:

"The question, whether it be proper to issue a *scire facias* against the Bank, divides itself into two heads of inquiry. First, whether the charter has been so violated as to inure a forfeiture? And if so, is it expedient to exact the forfeiture? The decision of the first would preclude me from an inquiry into the second; *for, inasmuch as I believe the creation of this corporation to be unconstitutional, I cannot, without a violation of my oath, hesitate to repair the breach thus made in the Constitution, when an opportunity presents itself of doing so without violating the public faith.*

"Under every view, then, which I have been able to take, I think that the Bank has forfeited its charter, or, at least, that it becomes us to direct the *scire facias*. If we differ on the subject of violation and forfeiture, submit it to the court to settle the question. It is the mode pointed out in the charter, and against it the stockholders can have no good objection.

"There remains now but one branch of inquiry with those who do not think

* The present condition of the affairs of the United States Bank shows that this was more a prophecy than a figure of speech.

the creation of this corporation an unconstitutional act, viz.: Is it expedient to direct a *scire facias*, or, in other words, to put down this corporation? *I contend that it is.* For one, I enter my protest against the banking system as conducted in this country: a system not to be supported by any correct principle of political economy. A gross delusion, the dream of a visionary; a system which has done more to corrupt the morals of society than any thing else—which has introduced a struggle for wealth, instead of that honorable struggle which governs the actions of the patriot, and makes ambition virtue—which has made the husbandman spurn his cottage, and introduced a spirit of luxury at variance with the simplicity of our institutions. I call upon the warm advocates of banking now to surrender their errors. Shall I take them by the hand, and lead them through our cities? Bankruptcy meets us at every step—ruin stares us everywhere in the face. Shall I be told of the benefits arising to commerce from the concentration of capital? Away with the delusion; experience has exposed its fallacy. True, for a moment it has operated as a stimulus; but, like ardent spirits, it has produced activity and energy but for a moment; relaxation has followed, and the torpor of death has ensued. When you first open your bank, much bustle ensues: a fictitious goddess, pretending to be Wealth, stands at the door, inviting all to enter, and receive accommodation. Splendid palaces arise, the ocean is covered with sails; but some alteration in the state of the country takes place; and when the thoughtless adventurer, seated in the midst of his family, in the enjoyment of imaginary felicity, sketches out to himself long and halcyon days, his prospects are overshadowed, and misery, ruin, and bankruptcy make their appearance in the form of bank curtailments. If this be true—and I appeal to the knowledge of all men for its truth—I demand to know if you can put down the system too soon? Can we too soon escape the dangers with which we are surrounded? I know I shall be told that, even if we put down this bank, the state banks will still exist. Even if true, the position is not a justifiable one. If the state Legislatures do not follow the example which we set them, we shall have acquitted ourselves of our duty. It is all that can be asked of us."

But enough on this point. President Tyler knows no mercy for a United States Bank, has never known any. Twice within a single year he placed his VETO on it; and this under circumstances of temptation and threatening, to which the heroic Jackson was a stranger when he vetoed the same Institution. The latter was sustained by an overwhelming party; the former was deserted by all save a faithful few who clung to him in his forlorn hope.

Page upon page in proof of his never-dying hostility to the Bank, could be quoted had we room.

His Views on the Tariff.

On this important subject President Tyler is thoroughly Democratic. He voted against the Tariff Bill of 1828, that "Bill of Abominations," as it is properly called by the great majority of the people; indeed by all excepting those who "put money in their purse" by the system. His doctrine, and no doubt it is the sound one, is, that if the Manufacturing interest receive undue protection, so that it shall become a more lucrative business than other pursuits, capital and labor will flow toward it; and in the long run, the Manufacturers would not be so much benefited as they expect to.

Mark what he says on this point.

"If gentlemen imagine that by this bill they are securing the permanent interests of the manufacturers; if they believe that this is all which will be required at the hands of the Legislature, they are most grossly deceived. This is but the incipient measure of a system. I venture to predict, that after the lapse of a very few years, we shall be assailed by as urgent petitions as those which have poured in on us at the present session.

"What will be the effect of this measure? It proposes a rate of duties sufficiently high to enable our artisans to undersell foreign artisans in the markets of this country. For a short time it will have that effect, but it cannot long continue. It adds to the profits of those who at this time have their capital

invested in manufactures; and while other classes will labor under severe pecuniary embarrassments, they will enjoy comparative prosperity. What will be the consequence? Why, sir, there is no principle in political economy more universally true, than that capital *will* flow into those employments from which it can derive the greatest profits. This bill, then, will have the effect of causing new investments of capital. Thus a spirit of competition will have been generated, and in the course of a few years the profits of these capitalists will have settled down to their present level. The supply will always, after a short time, suit itself to the demand, and from being at first deficient, will often exceed it."

Some years later he said in Congress—

"I have embraced, in the short analysis which I have just given, the whole argument in favor of the tariff system. The answer accompanies it, and the decision cannot be at variance with the opinions I am advocating. Operating on the members of an individual society, it would be highly oppressive and unjust; but what shall we say of its effects upon states—*inter pares?* The confederacy rests on the principle of perfect equality among its members. To impose a tax which operates unequally among the states, enriching some and impoverishing others, is to violate that original design, and remove the foundation stone on which the social edifice was made to rest."

At a still later period he holds this emphatic language on this topic:

"After this, let not the name of Washington be invoked in support of this policy. A majority of the Senate have resolved upon removing his venerated remains from their resting-place, to bury them in the midnight gloom of some subterranean vault of this huge edifice. Let us the rather manifest our veneration for his memory by following his precepts. Attend to his last bequest made to his countrymen: 'Harmony, and a liberal intercourse with all foreign nations, are recommended by humanity, policy, and interest—that even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand, neither seeking nor granting exclusive preferences and favors—consulting the natural course of things—diffusing and diversifying by gentle means the streams of commerce, and forcing nothing.' Why force any thing in such a country? Consult the pages of history, and tell me if ever a nation had made such rapid advances in refinement and wealth as this, before we resorted to political quackery, and administered sickening nostrums to force every thing. A wilderness reclaimed —a world filled and filling with inhabitants—the arts and sciences keeping equal pace with our advance in wealth and prosperity, all going on happily and harmoniously, and the country advancing with rapid strides to the consummation of its high destinies. Why, then, Mr. President, force any thing?"

Notwithstanding Mr. Tyler's decided views as to the undesirableness of a high Tariff, his wish ever has been and is to have the matter adjusted in the spirit of harmony and good faith; as well toward the manufacturer as toward the people. And there is nothing more susceptible of proof than that from his suggestion the celebrated Compromise Act was hit upon. At all events *he voted for it.* Hear what he said on the subject:

"*I would not rashly and rudely lay hands on the manufacturer, if I had the power to do so. While giving peace to one section, I would not produce discord in another. This would be to accomplish nothing. The manufacturers desire time;* GIVE THEM TIME, AMPLE TIME. IF THEY WOULD COME DOWN TO THE REVENUE STANDARD AND ABANDON THE PROTECTIVE POLICY, I WOULD ALLOW THEM FULL TIME. *I present these suggestions, for I am anxious to see this vexed question settled.*"

And this was the manner in which it *was* settled. The protective principle was surrendered, and the *ad valorem* system established; a gradual reduction of the duties on all hitherto protected articles took place, to terminate on the 30th of June, 1842, a period of more than nine years, when no duty above 20 per cent. *ad valorem* was to be laid; and the duties on all articles not similar to those manufactured in the country were immediately repealed.

His Regard for the Constitution.

This is his crowning virtue as a Politician. There is not a man living, there never has been a man, so earnest in his defence of this great Charter of our

liberties, as John Tyler. With emphasis he may be called—THE DEFENDER OF THE CONSTITUTION. In what earnest, eloquent, spirit-stirring language he speaks in its defence in the Senate, against the damning doctrine of construction and implication which the arch spirit of Federalism is wont to urge in behalf of unconstitutional laws! As we listen to him we feel as did those who drank in the soul-animating words of Demosthenes, and are ready to cry with them, "*Let's fight Philip.*"

"I have read to the Senate," said he, "the clause in the Constitution relating to this subject. I have said that no man could mistake the meaning. I beg leave to recant that expression. There is one class of men who may construe it very differently: statesmen they call themselves, but no more like the statesmen of former times 'than I to Hercules.' They belong not to the earth, nor deal with it justly; they spurn the ground on which they walk. Following the lights of a bewildered imagination, they rush into speculations, and, in their mad career, trample under foot rights natural and chartered. The Constitution presents no barrier in their way. Its language, however simple and plain, is construed into an ambiguous text, to suit their ruinous designs. Every thing is too plain and simple for their vast minds. They go for splendor; and what does not glitter is regarded as worthless. May Heaven, in its goodness, relieve us from all the tribe. Sir, I take the simple, unambiguous language of the Constitution as I find it. I will not inquire what *it should be*, but *what it is*, when I come to decide upon it. The wisdom of our illustrious ancestors framed it; and, when I am asked to exchange it for the policy of the hour, I answer nay. No matter by what circumstances I may be surrounded—abused, slandered, vilified, as much as my bitterest enemies may please—this shall be my answer: Every day's experience satisfies me that amid all the turmoil and confusion of parties, the first post of safety is, to stand by the Constitution; the second post of safety is, to stand by the Constitution; and the last post of safety is, to stand by the Constitution."

While a member of the Senate of the United States an occasion presented itself in which his professions of regard for the Constitution were put to the severest test. The Legislature of Virginia instructed him to vote in the Senate contrary to his own sense of right. He had no alternative but to *obey*, to vote against his conscience, or *resign*. He chose the latter, and gave up three unexpired years of his term. This is his language on that occasion:—

"When acting under an oath, the public agent, whether a senator or a juror, is bound by an obligation of a higher and more controlling character than can proceed from any earthly source. The Constitution of the United States is the original and primary letter of instructions—supreme over all, and binding upon all. For the agent who is sworn to support it, to violate it knowingly and intentionally would be an act of the grossest immorality and most unmitigated debasement. Such is the condition in which, in my view of the subject, obedience to your instructions would place me. It is known to you, gentlemen, that on my entering the Senate, the only oath which I took was an oath to support the Constitution of the United States; to support it in all and each of its provisions; to yield it neither to force, persuasion, nor expediency. No matter what the object, should its attainment confer upon me the greatest personal advantages, still to remain unseduced—not to touch that forbidden fruit. I entered into a covenant with my Creator, to break which would not fail to place in my bosom a Promethean vulture to tear and devour me. The obligation, then, to obey an instruction which calls upon me to break that covenant, cannot possibly exist. I should be unworthy the confidence of all honorable men if I could be induced, under any circumstances, to commit an act of deliberate perjury. Instead of a seat in the Senate, I should richly deserve to be put in the pillory, and to lose both my ears, as an indelible mark of my baseness; and such would be the sentence which the laws of Virginia would pronounce against me. You have admitted the truth of this position in the alternative presented in your second resolution. Between these alternatives I cannot hesitate to choose. It is not for every difference of opinion between the representative and constituent that the constituent would necessarily require the

resignation of the representative. In the course of a somewhat long political life, it must have occurred that my opinions have been variant from the opinions of those I represent; but in presenting to me the alternative of resignation in this instance, you give me to be distinctly informed that the accomplishment of your object is regarded as of such primary importance that my resignation is desired if compliance cannot be yielded. I am bound to consider you as in this fairly representing the sentiments of our common constituents, the people of Virginia, to whom alone you are amenable if you have mistaken their wishes. My position in regard to this whole subject is of a character to preclude me from going into abstractions. I do not hesitate, on the contrary, to declare that if you had, as the accredited organs of the people, addressed me a request to vacate my seat in the Senate, your request would have had with me the force of law; not a day or an hour could I desire to remain in the Senate beyond that hour wherein I came to be informed that it was the settled wish of the people of Virginia that I should retire from their service. That people have honored me with the highest offices within their gifts. If the talents which I have brought into their service be humble, I shall have at least brought fidelity to their interests. Nowhere else have I looked for reward but to their approbation. I have served under four administrations, and might, doubtlessly, by a course of subserviency and sycophancy, have obtained what is called by some preferment. But what could have compensated for the baseness of my prostitution, and the betrayal of the confidence reposed in me by a generous people. The executive files furnish no record of my name as an applicant for any of the crumbs which have fallen from the executive table. I repeat, that I have looked exclusively to the people of Virginia, and when they have extended to me their confidence for twenty odd years—when I am indebted to them for whatever of credit and standing I possess in the world, I cannot and will not permit myself to remain in the Senate for a moment beyond the time that their accredited organs shall instruct me that my services are no longer acceptable. If gratitude for the past did not, my own conscious weakness would control my course. What would it profit the country or myself for me to remain in the Senate against their wishes? By retaining my place in opposition to their fixed, declared, and settled will, I should aid no cause—advance no great purpose—be powerless for good, and provoke only to harm; reposing on my feeble strength, I should vainly flatter myself that I could, with my single arm, sustain the Constitution, and keep back what I might consider the tide of error, when in very truth I should but excite the popular prejudices more strongly, and imminently endanger the Constitution by my very efforts to sustain it."

His Views of Foreign Commerce.

President Tyler is, and always has been, in favor of moderate duties. During the Congress of 1831–2 Mr. Tyler delivered a most masterly speech on the subject of the Tariff, in which he followed, through all their windings and subtleties, the doctrines opposed to Free-trade. This speech was, *beyond all question*, one of the most brilliant and Democratic ever delivered in any assembly in the world. We have no room to give even the slightest analysis of it at this time. We hope yet to put it into the hands of every man who is engaged in commercial pursuits, or who wishes well to the interests of commerce. We have room but for one short extract; namely:—

"*Independent of foreign nations!* Sir, this is not only a shallow, but in some measure an impious argument. An all-wise Providence never designed that man should be independent of man, or nation of nation. Separate man from his species—throw him upon his own unaided and unassisted resources—and you convert him forthwith into a ferocious savage. So with a nation. The ocean, which has been aptly called the highway of nations, bears upon its bosom the rich freight of the arts and sciences of one portion of the world in exchange for those of another. Light is then given for light, and civilization is advanced to its highest point of perfection. But adopt the opposite policy—accomplish this work of independence—convert the frozen regions of the North into the

burning equator in their productions: in other words, set at naught the decrees of the Creator in the formation of the globe, and let the ocean no longer be used for the great purposes of commerce, and the bold pretensions of man would be punished by the result of his own shortsighted policy. Chaos would come again, and the night of gloom and ignorance would enshroud the world. And, after all, are not nations that sell as dependent upon nations that buy as the reverse? The dependence is mutual, and that mutuality of interest and dependence constitutes the golden circle which embraces the universe."

His Views of the Sailor.

The navy and the mercantile marine of our nation have a warm friend in President Tyler. Some striking facts illustrative of this, will be given at another time. We can only refer on this occasion to what he said on this subject in time past; at a time when the thought of ever occupying the Presidential chair was the farthest from his mind.

Shortly after he became Governor of Virginia, he was invited by the Legislature to present a sword to Commodore Warrington, which had been voted him by that body. Mr. Tyler cheerfully complied, and among other eloquent remarks, said:

"The sailor's life is at the best a life of danger. He pursues honor on the mountain wave. and finds it in the battle and in the storm, and never did more distinguished chivalry display itself than in the conduct of our seamen during the late war. It had been vauntingly said that the infant navy committed to the protection of yourself and comrades would be buried in the ocean by the first blast which swept the Atlantic. But the blast came, the battle raged, and yet the banner of that navy floated on in triumph. The waves of every sea reflected its glory, and the wilderness itself was awakened by the shouts of victory. Virginia regards you, her gallant son, as having greatly contributed in producing these glorious results.

"Proud is the reflection consequent upon a faithful discharge of our duty; prouder still, the recollection that we have so acquitted ourselves as to have advanced the reputation of our native land in the eyes of foreign states. That modesty, so inseparable from true valor, may lead yourself and your gallant compatriots to believe that you have only contributed to exalt the character of your country in the eyes of the present generation; but believe not that the effects of your valor are to be as fleeting as the days of that race of men who beheld your exploits. The chivalry of a Howard and a Drake pointed the way to Aboukir and Trafalgar.

"The applause of his native land is the richest reward to which the patriot ever aspires. It is this for which 'he dares to live or dares to die.' It is the high incentive to those achievements which illustrate the page of history and give to poetry its brightest charm. Happy is that man who wins that reward by virtuous and patriotic deeds; and this, sir, has been your fortune. Receive, then, this sword, the memorial of Virginia's gratitude, bestowed with a confident assurance that it will be drawn whenever duty shall require it, and in none other than your country's cause."

His Interest for the Soldiers of the Revolution.

The claims of these heroic men he has ever sustained with all the earnestness of his nature. Never would he hear with patience any proposal to reduce their hard-earned pensions. Speaking of their services on a certain occasion, in Congress, he said:

"Their services in the achievement of our independence equally entitle them to the nation's gratitude. Why, then, should not Congress interfere in their behalf? While we present to the National Government an occasion for the exercise of its liberality, we present also a claim sanctioned by every principle of justice; and we might reasonably indulge the anticipation that our application would be listened to with attention and crowned with success."

And on another occasion:—

"The gallant corps of Marion and of Sumter, to mention no others, had great cause of complaint. They had stood forth for the country in its hour of greatest peril and deepest gloom; strangers to every comfort, their tent was the canopy of heaven, and their encampment the swamp and morass. Theirs was a pure an unalloyed patriotism, stimulated by no prospect of reward either in land or money. Their idol was their country; their only wish, its emancipation. But still the principle of that law was well ascertained and easily understood. That principle was necessity—great penury on the part of the soldier. It rested on charity."

His Views of Exclusive Privileges.

"Here, sir, I join issue with the gentleman. What is the end of all legislation? Is it not the public good? Do we come here to legislate away the rights and happiness of our constituents, or to advance and secure them? Suppose that, by carrying into effect a specified power in the Constitution, we inflict serious injury upon the body politic: will gentlemen contend that we are bound by a blind fatality, and compelled to act? Sir, such a doctrine cannot be supported even by the distinguished talents of that gentleman. The powers of this Constitution are all addressed to the sound discretion of Congress. You are not imperatively commanded, but authorized to act, if by so acting the good of the country will be promoted.

"Having, as I trust, overthrown this position of the honorable gentleman, I will now, by the indulgence of the committee, proceed to investigate the propriety of adopting this bill. IF THERE WERE NO OTHER OBJECTION TO ITS ADOPTION, THE CIRCUMSTANCE OF ITS CONFERRING EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGES ON A PARTICULAR CLASS OF SOCIETY WOULD SECURE TO IT MY OPPOSITION. I AM IN PRINCIPLE OPPOSED TO THE GRANT OF EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGES. THE VERY NATURE AND GENIUS OF OUR GOVERNMENT IS OPPOSED TO ANY SUCH GRANT. But even if I were disposed to yield this principle in any case, I could not do so in this. Is not the farmer, the manufacturer, the mechanic, equally entitled with the merchant to your protection, to the benefit of your laws? This bill is confined to the merchant alone. What have the agriculturist and mechanic done to forfeit their claims to your justice, your liberality?"

But our limits forbid that we follow President Tyler through his oft-repeated defence of the Democratic doctrines. It must suffice to say, that on the subject of *Internal Improvements;* on the *Indian Question;* on the *Missouri Question;* on *all*, he is Democratic, and only Democratic. He was an ardent friend and supporter of Jefferson, and of Jackson; *he voted for Mr. Van Buren's confirmation as Minister to Great Britain;* and he has ever stood, and still stands ready to go into the thickest of the fight for true Democracy.

Of his acts AS PRESIDENT it is our purpose to speak in another Tract; and to show that the acts of his Administration are worthy of the man, and of the able Cabinet he has called around him. We cannot close our humble labors without adverting to

The Personal Character of President Tyler.

This is beyond reproach. We can triumphantly challenge his bitterest enemy to show an instance in which he has swerved from the path of honor and of honesty. Though possessed of physical courage, surpassed only by the higher trait of *moral* courage, and though he has passed through the most troublous political times, THE BLOOD OF THE DUELLIST stains not his hands. He has sent no fellow-man to the scenes of another world, all "unanointed, unannealed." His disposition is eminently frank and confiding, making of his friends, friends indeed. The brilliancy, versatility, and impressiveness of his conversation, are known of all who have been in his society.

In closing this imperfect sketch of John Tyler, we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of making an extract from an address delivered by him in 1838, before the Literary Societies of Randolph Macon College, illustrating, as it does,

"Absolute perfection, it is lamentably true, is rarely if ever reached. As the hurricane or earthquake disturbs the quiet of the natural world, so some unruly passion from time to time bursts forth in its fury, dethroning reason, and shaking most terribly the animal system. In view of this, the ancient of other days hung his head in despair, and the lover of his species had almost ceased to hope. Let the truth be confessed: resting upon our own unaided resources, we are like mariners on the stormy deep, at the mercy of the fitful winds and unsteady waves, without chart or compass. We are driven we know not whither; no peaceful haven in view, and no friendly star shining amid the darkness by which to steer our course. There is but one hand strong enough to save us. Our Creator must be our preserver from the dangers which threaten. To Him alone we can raise our eyes in hope and confidence. Reposing on Him, our frailty is converted into strength, and the storm rages harmlessly around us. In His infinite goodness He has deputed among us a divine Teacher, and under the influence of His teaching the world has already been reclaimed from barbarism to civilization; from ignorance to knowledge. Before His coming, man mistook rashness for true courage, and a rude stoicism for virtue. The warrior clad in his armor, and trampling with his heel on the fallen, was esteemed the chief among men; and the war-cry which was sounded over every land, affrighted peace from the earth. Man was not only the enemy of his fellow-man, but the great enemy of himself. The passions were in fearful conflict. A new Star arose in the heavens, and there came healing on its beams. The spirit of anger, the darker spirit of revenge, hatred, with its kindred and gloomy host, was rebuked, and love and charity spread their mantle over the earth. Would we, then, know to what refuge we may flee from the madness of the passions? That refuge is to be found in the Christian doctrine; in the charity which it teaches, in the love which it inculcates. The Bible is the great moral code, whose lessons address themselves with resistless power to the heart and to the understanding. Where, among the boasted philosophy of the schools, shall we look for any thing to compare with its pure and divine instructions? What lamp, lighted up by all their proud wisdom, shines with so brilliant and yet so mild a lustre along the pathway of life? What so elevates the soul to a sublime conception of the attributes of the Deity? In striving to attain perfection, where shall we look for an exemplar but to the meek and lowly Nazarene? Let the champions of Infidelity, in their infuriate zeal, declaim as they may—until they shall have furnished to the world something better than in their idle ravings they have yet done, they and their works will go down in darkness to the same grave. They have striven in vain to shake the edifice of Christain faith; but its foundations are laid deep in the affections, and their assaults have ended only in their own destruction. The banner of Infidelity has been struck down to the dust, while the Cross has been set in the all-glorious heavens."

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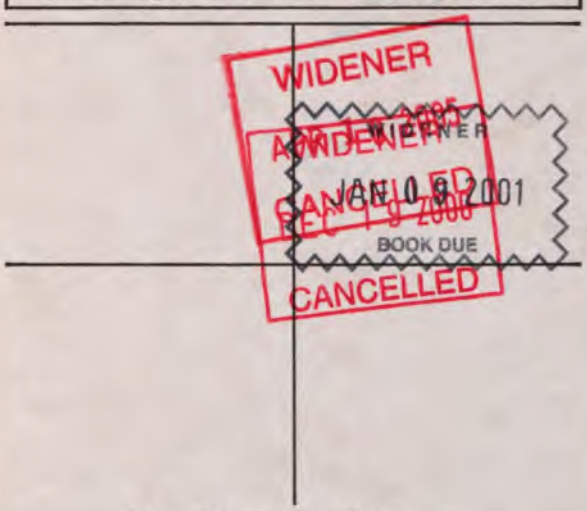

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